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## TAINÉ'S WARNING.

WE desire to introduce our readers to the knowledge of a remarkable French writer, Hippolyte Adolphe Taine, whose works are beginning to attract attention. We speak of him as being remarkable, because, unlike most French authors, he writes to the apprehension of English minds. There is nothing jerky or ranting about his style. We never fail to understand his meaning, which we cannot say of Victor Hugo and many others. Perhaps this phenomenon of intelligibility is partly due to the fact that M. Taine is well acquainted with the English language and literature, about which he has written with vigour and accuracy. He is not an old man; for he was born so lately as 1828, and in his own country enjoyed the benefits of a university education. The turn of his mind appears to be toward critical analysis. He sifts to the bottom all he takes in hand. We cannot call him an historian; but he will spend months and years in examining old documents, and picking out the facts on which historians may form their narratives. The laborious perseverance with which he pursues these studies gives one an extraordinary idea of his patient and intelligent industry.

The latest of Taine's productions has engaged the earnest consideration of Frenchmen, as bearing on subjects of momentous interest, and reflectively may prove of service in our own country. The title of the book is *Les Origines de la France Contemporaine*, which might be construed to signify 'the origin of the present condition of things in France.' It is a terrible ripping up of the idiotic way in which the French monarchy was upset and followed by endless and abortive attempts to establish a government at once settled and favourable to public liberty. From it we are enabled clearly to understand how France has brought itself into that strangely exceptional condition, out of which successive generations of schemers are seemingly unable to drag it; so that after nearly a hundred years, with several intermediate revolutions and *coups d'état*, a very

gallant and estimable people are still at the mercy of circumstances—a queer outcome, not without a salutary lesson all over the world.

It has always appeared to us that the turning-point towards ruin in France was about 1541, when Francis I. commenced his infamous crusades against the Waldenses. Up till this time England and France were nearly on a par as concerns social organisation. Now they parted company. England abolished the monastic establishments, set up a modified religious system, and commenced something like regular parliamentary legislation. France on the contrary began the ignoble work of religious persecution, and the perfecting of political despotism. Successive French kings, drawing after them nobility and clergy into a vortex of wasteful though polite dissipation, gave a twist to the social fabric from which it never recovered. M. Taine dwells at great length on the frivolous habits of the court. Affecting almost the character of a deity, the king knew nothing of practical government. He was an ignorant and highly decorous puppet, and government was carried on by ministers accountable to nobody. The great point was to draw money from an inordinate taxation that reached the humblest individual, and which was expended in monstrous extravagance. The principal, if not the only occupation of the king was hunting. Great tracts of fertile country were laid waste for his amusement. Louis XVI. has been usually considered a well-behaved king, but he did little else than slaughter wild animals. Taine tells us to a nicety the extent of his butcheries, for the record of them is preserved. Sometimes he killed upwards of four hundred head of game in a day. In 1780 he brought down 20,534 head; in 1781, 20,291 head. In fourteen years he destroyed 189,251 head, besides 1254 stags, with boars and bucks proportionate—all by his own hand. Even when affairs were in the most critical state, the king went out hunting. In short, the mania for slaughtering wild animals, which were bred and preserved for his diversion, set aside all considerations of state policy. According to Taine, battue-shooting, as it is now called, had not

a little to do with bringing on the Revolution, for besides withdrawing attention from matters of solid concern, it involved the appropriation of vast domains for the rearing of creatures doomed to destruction by way of pastime. The brutality of this species of pastime need not be dwelt on. The wickedness consisted in depriving the people of food, in order that game might not be encroached upon except by the king and privileged orders.

The accounts given by Taine of the condition of the peasantry in the eighteenth century when oppression had reached its climax, are appalling. In the most fertile regions there were misery and privation. Black bread steeped in water, and even that to a limited extent, was the principal food. In some places the people were reduced to eating grass and weeds, though to touch the weeds was reckoned penal, as they were sacred to the feeding of game. A case is told of a poor woman with two children in swaddling-clothes whose whole reliance was on the milk of two goats. The goats ate the weeds, and that being a crime, the goats were killed by authority. The extortions in the shape of taxes to which the humbler classes were subject are almost incredible. On the most wretched cottage a house-tax was levied. To escape this exaction, some tried to live in caves and holes in the earth. The subterfuge was unavailing. They had to pay a poll-tax of five francs a year, from which it was impossible to escape. A tax was levied on salt. Some endeavoured to do with the smallest possible quantity of the article; but the tax-collectors visiting every dwelling estimated what each family ought to consume per annum, and on that they were taxed. People living at the sea-side occasionally found a little salt dried on the rocks. If they dared to appropriate it, they were guilty of cheating the revenue, and were subject to a severe punishment; the handful of salt so secured being in the meanwhile destroyed, as a warning to all persons who audaciously picked up so much as a particle of salt on the sea-shore.

The nobility, seigneurs, and other great men, being drawn off to Paris, where it was indispensable they should shew themselves, the peasantry and other rural occupants generally had no friend to whom they could look but the curé or parish priest. The curés, however, could do little for them; for besides having no sort of political influence, they for the most part had only the barest means of subsistence. Although practically doing nearly all the clerical work in the country, they were thought to be well paid with a stipend equal to twelve or fifteen pounds a year; while the higher clergy enjoyed large revenues, which they did nothing for, and possessed the additional privilege of being exempt from taxation. These disorders in the ecclesiastical system were another cause of revolutionary violence. M. Taine presents a number of amusing details of the expenditure of the royal household, in which some thousands of hangers-on, high and low, were concerned. The waste of food at the various tables in the household was something awful. 'The street at Versailles is still shewn, formerly lined with stalls, to which the king's valets resorted to nourish Versailles by the sale of his dessert.'

One naturally wonders how such abuses should have been tolerated; but any comment upon

them would have been followed by summary vengeance. At the very least, any one finding fault would have been scorned as a bourgeois, and lost caste. No doubt, the humbler and middle classes had their grumble in an underhand way. Politically, these classes were reckoned little better than the lower animals. A tradesman, no matter what was his wealth, was contemptuously called a *roturier*, a term equivalent to a clodpoll. Attorneys and notaries were relegated to the ranks of the *roturiers*. No nobleman driving through the streets of Paris felt he did wrong in causing the wheels of his carriage to splash with mud any ordinary passenger. *Roturiers* might be thankful they were not ridden over. In all this there was accumulating a degree of hatred and discontent fated to burst out like torrents of fire from a volcano.

How the volcano did burst out is exceedingly curious. Though destined to burst out some way or other, no one could have prognosticated that the flame was to be kindled as a matter of a jesting among people of rank. Taine describes the usual conversation at the court and in the salons as having long been a kind of drivelling nonsense interspersed with witticisms. There prevailed no knowledge of public nor of local affairs. Life was viewed as a high-dress opera. All acted a part. Talk of the actual condition of things would have been deemed degrading, absurd. The conversation flowed in abstractions and mirthful sallies. By-and-by there arose charming observations on the rights of man; and this style of talk, promoted by the philosophers who figured in good society, became a passion. What strikes us now as very strange was the inconsiderateness of haranguing in drawing-rooms on subjects of this nature, for society as it actually existed was a denial of the rights which it became the fashion to extol. It was like playing with firebrands. Yet, the truth, as learned from Taine and historians generally, is that the fashionable declaimers never seemed to give a thought as to their fine-spun theories being taken up in earnest.

This kind of prattle about the rights of man would in time have passed away like other fashionable diversions, but for the fact that the philosophic theories got into print, and were eagerly caught up by students of the various colleges, who began to deliver public harangues interspersed with scraps of Latin on the glorious old republics of Rome and Sparta. *Roturiers* of every description speedily embraced the new doctrines, that were so energetically diffused. The lower classes could not read, or had no inclination to do so; that happened to be of little consequence, for the harangues of the orators made them aware how they had all along been cheated of their rights. The leading apostle of the new doctrine was Jean Jacques Rousseau, son of a watchmaker in Geneva. After roving about in a half-mad kind of way, Rousseau settled in Paris. Some of his writings were morally objectionable; but none of them did any serious harm politically except his *Contrat Social*. This work, characteristically wild in sentiment, purported that in nature there is a social contract which ought to regulate the rights of human beings one towards another. Without using any jargon about an alleged contract, we all acknowledge that in every well-regulated community there are rights to be

mutually respected. The civil law enforces these rights. Rousseau in his crazy dreamings went far beyond this reasonable view of the matter. His *Contrat Social* laid down the principle, that irrespective of mental diversities and casual circumstances, all men are equal; starting from which theory came the delirious cry of 'liberty, equality, and fraternity.' Rousseau died in 1778. His tomb, which may be seen in the Pantheon at Paris, consists of a vault with a door partially open, out of which is stretched the figure of a hand holding a blazing torch, as an emblem of his having set fire to the world. His writings certainly were the torch which fired the French revolutionary volcano. In eleven years from his decease, the appalling effects of his doctrines were visible. The oppressions of the privileged orders, the denial of justice, the crucial taxation, the religious intolerance, the frightful condition of the country, furnished materials for the conflagration. How the mob were incited to lay the monarchy in ruin, how the king and queen perished on the scaffold, how the nobility whom they had pampered left them in their distress, and fled abroad like flocks of scared pigeons, are facts with which every one is familiar.

The French Revolution was not the mere overthrow of a dynasty. In the madness of the moment, every institution was laid low. It was a clean sweep. Under the inspirations of 'liberty, equality, and fraternity,' the nation had to begin over again, according to the fancies of men who never possessed any experience in government. There was no want of audacity in trying to put things to rights. Men who could just sign their names, and had barely shoes to their feet, took the upper hand, or were obsequiously consulted. Fanatical clubs domineered over the earliest appointed legislative bodies. From the notion of putting all on an equal footing, the right of primogeniture was abolished, and the rule of equal division of property among children was established. Of all the laws enacted during this wild saturnalia, this one has wrought the most lasting mischief; for through successive divisions and subdivisions of property, it has created a poor peasant proprietary, unfitted to take any intelligent part in public business, and who are usually a facile herd in the hands of a designing central authority. It has further had the malignant effect of keeping down the number of children in families, whereby the population of France is suffering a gradual diminution. The Legislative Assembly, as it was called, which met in October 1792, was composed of individuals generally inferior in knowledge or social status. Among the whole, there were not fifty members with means of livelihood above two pounds a week, which does not surprise us, for the constituencies were for the most part devoid of education, and easily imposed on by pretenders of no administrative capacity.

The moral to be drawn from the outcome of the French Revolution will survive throughout all time. It is, that, from a whim in abstract politics, a country may recklessly bring on itself the most terrible disasters. From what has been stated, the convulsion in France was in the first place due to a gross system of mismanagement, and in fact a breakdown was inevitable. The thing to be deplored was the attempt to remodel the government on nothing more substantial than a chimera—a very

pretty chimera, no doubt, but only a toy, and not qualified to encounter the hard realities of everyday life. Abstractly, men may be equal. Each has a head, two legs, two arms, and other physical attributes of humanity. But you cannot say that the man who is ignorant, thriftless, devoid of self-respect, and who, meanly clothed, stands lounging in the streets with his hands in his pockets waiting with the hope of being treated to a dram—and of which class we see hundreds daily—is in social aspects equal to a man who is intelligent, diligent in his calling, and who by a course of thrift has realised a decent maintenance for himself and family. The two cannot be compared, and could not be spoken of as equal unless by a perversion of terms. Camille Desmoulins and other heedless enthusiasts who declaimed on the tops of tables in the Palais-Royal on the rights of man, failed to recognise the distinction between man as a mere uninstructed animal, and man as an intelligent being alive to his duties and responsibilities. The Parisian orators, in their insane philanthropy, did all in their power to flatter the most ignorant and depraved of the population, and to puff them up with such exalted notions of their dignity and importance, as led them to assume an intolerable superiority, and commit the most fearful excesses. It was a sad mistake; and do we not see this mistake, though in modified conditions, perpetrated in a very inconsiderate manner until the present day?

The typical French voter immediately after the Revolution, was an unlettered being; and his successor in the rural districts, whose only wish is to drudge, to live parsimoniously, and to be let alone, remains in the same category. So do the waifs, the roughs, or whatever they may be called, who embarrass the large towns. Thoughtful Frenchmen of the present day, like M. Taine, quite understand how the more intelligent and the propertied classes may be swamped by the ignorant and semi-pauperised. They are not inclined to think that representative institutions are in themselves a guarantee for sound legislation; because they have seen with what fatal effect the worst passions and prejudices among the uneducated masses act upon representatives in bringing about changes which intelligent and untrammelled individuals would repudiate. The French, who have paid so dearly for chimeras, may perhaps be under a morbid sensibility on this score, but we cannot withhold from them our sympathy. It is clear that every kind of representative government that has been set up in France, has fallen by the clamour of mobs. The clamour of a Parisian mob, incited by a skilfully propagated falsehood, hurried France into war in July 1870; and in three months afterwards the same mob wrecked the whole machinery of government in the course of a Sunday afternoon. Whether mobs act directly, or by representatives who, through weakness or selfishness, meanly curry their favour, the end is the same. It seems to matter little whether outrageous proceedings are counselled by a mob in the parks and streets or by assemblages of their appointment under a roof.

The WARNING we gather from Taine is, that no representative system is safe which rests mainly on a poor and illiterate constituency. France feels the full force of this warning, which comes too late. It is, however, not too late for other countries

whose institutions have not yet been dissolved by the whims of philanthropists, charlatans, and politicians, who act either under strangely inconsiderate notions of duty, or are not disinclined to jeopardise national existence in order to promote the temporary interests of party. Far be it from us to assume a function irreconcilable with the well-known character of these pages, but it is hardly out of place for us to recommend calm consideration in every matter of serious national concern, and in particular to draw attention to the terrible lessons taught by contemporary history.

W. C.

## HELENA, LADY HARROGATE.

### CHAPTER XXXVII.—ANOTHER SORT OF CAPTAIN.

BAFFLED, by Richard Hold's singular change of purpose, in his hopes of procuring information from him, Lord Harrogate next turned his attention to the discovery of that officer in the Guards bearing the aristocratic name of Standish, on the back of whose card the words 'Wilkins' and 'ney' were still visible in faded ink. It is not very difficult at the Horse Guards, the War Office, or the Army Agents', to glean some particulars as to the present status of an old officer formerly in the Household Brigade; but Major Raffington, who was fortunately found in the bay-window of the Pterodactyle Club, in Pall Mall, saved Lord Harrogate the trouble of a reference to these grave authorities.

'I've known so many, you see, of the name,' said the major, telling off his quondam acquaintances on the buttons of his waistcoat. 'There was Beauty Standish, very vain dog, but remarkably handsome fellow—he died in *Attila's* year—so long ago as that!' (Major Raffington did not presumably allude to the Hunnish conqueror, but to a by-gone winner of the Derby.) 'Then there was Hide-and-seek Standish, as we called him, who was head and ears in debt, and spent his energies in dodging the bailiffs. And there was Charley, who exchanged into the Line, and died of cholera at Lahore. And—I've purposely kept him till the last!—your man must be old "Trump" Standish, as they nicknamed him, on account of his proclivities for whist. Retired these fifteen years, and no chicken then. Yes, the old boy is alive and in London; chambers at the Albany. He and I are about the only two sensible men in town, for we know when we are well off, and never follow the herd in rushing out of it. Not a member here, old Captain Standish. Belongs to my club, the Walpole, though, and nets his ten or fifteen guineas a night at whist after dinner in the season as well as ever he did. I happen to know he's in London, for we dined alone together yesterday at the Walpole; and I made the *chef* give us a more *soigné* bit of dinner than you would think possible at this dead time of year. Not half a bad fellow, old Standish!'

Captain Standish will be with your lordship in a minute—he has not quite finished dressing—if your lordship will please to wait,' the captain's man had said, as he pushed forward an easy-chair, and deferentially smoothed out the morning papers on the table, and then leaving the visitor in the little drawing-room, hurried away through the

curtained doors to lend assistance in the tedious process of his master's toilet.

Lord Harrogate, as he looked around him, felt as though he were in a species of social museum, so many of the objects which he beheld were suggestive of recollections of the past. On the walls hung the portraits of dead and gone beauties, toasts of other days. The yellow letter, displayed upon yonder table with a sort of ostentatious carelessness, and beginning 'Dear Standish,' was signed by a Royal Highness whose mortal remains had long reposed in crimson-velvet coffin, gold-adorned, under tons of marble. The very perfumes of musk and ambergris that clung to the portfolios and caskets and Books of Beauty and china-bowls artistically disposed on stand and console, were like ghostly scents from some Elysium of an obsolete fashion.

The appearance of the master of these treasures, when at length he presented himself, with affable bow and smile nicely graduated to display as much as was prudent of his dazzling front-teeth, was perfectly in accordance with the objects around.

'I make no apology, my lord, for receiving you thus,' said the ex-Guardsman, speaking with that measured self-conscious urbanity of tone and bearing which but a few survivors of a courtlier generation yet affect. 'There is a time for dressing-gown and slippers, as there is for coat and boots, and I know that I can trust to your kindness to excuse mine.'

Captain Standish's dressing-gown and Captain Standish's slippers, on their own merits needed neither excuse nor apology, if once the principle of such elaborate undress could be conceded. The captain belonged to an era when splendid robes of this kind were habitually worn by men of fashion, and when a dandy received visits draped in brocade or velvet gorgeous with embroidery of floss-silk or gold or silver. He knew better at his time of life, and in the second half of the nineteenth century, than to glimmer in quasi-theatrical magnificence. But the dressing-gown which he wore, a mere pattern of palms on a mouse-gray ground, was such as a king could not buy, now that the remnant of the Cashmere shawl-weavers have ceased to treat the matchless Himalayan wool as once they did; and the purple-velvet slippers, heavy with gold thread from the cunning needles of Stamboul, were worthy of the dressing-gown.

The wearer of these handsome vestments was a well-preserved, fresh-looking, elderly dandy, with small blue eyes, that were quick to note the pips on each card as it dropped from the hand of the player; a wig that contained a slight but judicious sprinkling of gray; and a firm mouth and chin. His necktie, of the palest buff, was arranged with a neatness unattainable by the careless gilded youth of to-day; and his waistcoat, of a somewhat deeper shade, owed its perfect fit and unincreased smoothness to the combined efforts of tailor, laundress, and valet.

'Had the honour of knowing your father. Knew him as Lord Marlow, in your grandfather's time. The Harrogate title wasn't in your branch then. That is why I ventured on the liberty of offering you my hand.'

In saying this, Captain Standish was within the mark. It was not his whole hand, but three of

its blanched and bejewelled fingers that he had extended to Lord Harrogate. To a young man, the famous whist-player seldom held out more than two. In the days and in the society when and where the captain had learned his code of ethics, hand-shaking was a ceremony to be nicely regulated, not lavished, as at present, wholesale.

'It was on the subject of that very title—of the unfortunate event which brought it into our immediate family,' said Lord Harrogate, 'that I wished to speak with you, Captain Standish.'

'Ah, indeed!' returned the Guardsman coolly. 'Very delighted, of course, if I can be of service in any way, but at the present moment believe me, I cannot see how. Sad story! I remember as if it were yesterday the Drawing-room at St James's, when Clare, Lady Harrogate, went to court as Lady Harrogate. As Miss Clare De Vere she had been presented, of course; and I remember how lovely she looked at the great ball at Dorsetshire House. Then she married Ned De Vere—he owed me thirty pounds, poor fellow, the sag-doen of an unsettled account at cards, when he broke his neck—and the child was drowned, and

— But bless me! my Lord Harrogate, what can I do to right matters at this time of day?'

Lord Harrogate produced, not the moiety of the torn card, from which Inspector Drew, who clung to it with fanatical tenacity, as the one undeniable piece of circumstantial evidence available in the case, was reluctant to be separated, but a fac-simile, due to the patient skill of a photographer, at the same time explaining where and how the original had been found.

'I haven't a doubt of its being my card,' said the captain unhesitatingly. 'I have stuck to the model until to-day. See!' he added, as he opened a card-case in embossed silver, and shook out a half-dozen of pasteboard parallelograms; 'the only change I have seen fit to make is in putting "late Grenadier Guards." As to how the card got to the towing-path, that,' said Captain Standish meditatively, 'is quite another sort of thing. Perhaps a dun dropped it. My tailor, I know, was fond of gudgeon-fishing, and once boasted to me of his skill in spinning a minnow. I'm not an angler myself.'

The written words 'Wilkins' and 'ney' at first suggested nothing to the Guardsman's usually retentive memory. 'The only fellow of the name that I remember,' he said, stroking his smooth-shaven chin, 'was a stage-coachman, Nat Wilkins, who tooled the Cambridge *Telegraph* after Dick Vaughan, that we called Neck-or-nought, died. "Ney" too is a puzzle to me. Courteney is a name that ends so, to be sure. So does Waveney. I knew Lord Waveney, the present Duke, you know, remarkably well. But he was not a Cambridge tuft, and had nothing to do with Nat Wilkins.'

Lord Harrogate, somewhat unwillingly, mentioned the name of Sir Sykes Denzil.

'Oh, ah, to be sure,' replied the captain, elevating his eyebrows a very little; 'man that came in by chance for all old Harrogate had to leave. Yes, I knew Sykes Denzil—knew him too when he was so pushed, about the time that old Sir Harbottle went to his rest, that he looked twice at a shilling before he called a hackney or tipped a waiter. And now I think of it,' added the ex-Guardsman with a half-reproachful tap on

his square forehead, 'I am reminded somehow of another Wilkins, a lawyer in the City. I've had no dealings with the fellow ever since I sent in my papers and left the army; but he was a useful sort of fellow to gentlemen in difficulties.'

Lord Harrogate drew a deep breath. He stood astonished at his own dullness in not having identified ere this the owner of the name of Wilkins with that pushing London solicitor who was now law-agent of the Carbery property, and whose influence over Sir Sykes was the subject of much local wonder. As for the 'ney,' that might easily be the last syllable in the word 'attorney,' or it might be part of an address.

'I've a Law List somewhere,' said the captain, ringing the bell; and his well-trained servant promptly hunted out the red-backed volume, wherein figured Enoch Wilkins, of St Nicholas Poultry, in the City of London.

'There you have your "ney,"' said Captain Standish triumphantly; 'and I suppose I recommended the man to Denzil—young Denzil, as he then was—since the card is mine. But I don't in the least recollect having done so; and all the cross-examining counsel of the Central Criminal Court would fail, I fear, in refreshing my memory so far as to make me remember it. Yet I conclude I did so, since the card is mine.'

#### CHAPTER XXXVIII.—FOR VALUABLE CONSIDERATION.

'In short, Jasper, it must be done!' Sir Sykes groaned out the words rather than spoke them, and as he did so, sank back in his chair and hid his face and almost sobbed. There was something piteous in the abnegation, on the part of a proud grave, man of that dignified decorum which had for years infolded him like a mantle of state, that might have touched the heart of even Jasper. And Jasper seeing his father's distress, and perceiving that it was genuine, was startled, if not sympathetic.

'I don't like to see you thus, sir,' he said with unusual gentleness, rising from the chair in which he had lounged till now. He moved a step or two forward, and then stood, as though dubious as to what consolation to offer.

There had never been much confidence between the baronet and his heir. In some respects they were perhaps too much alike, in others as wide apart as the poles; but there were no points of contact in the characters of the two men which could render the company of one congenial to the other. Still, blood is thicker than water, and Jasper could not view quite unmoved his father's evident misery.

'You mean, sir, I think, that I must marry Miss Willis—if she will have me, of course?' said Jasper slowly. 'It is a serious step to take. No backing out of it, when once the words "I will" have been pronounced. I did not see my way, you may remember, when we talked of this before.'

'You did not, as you phrase it, see your way,' returned Sir Sykes bitterly; 'in other words, you held out for high terms, and now I have no choice but to submit to them. It is the fashion of the day, it would appear, to drive a hard bargain, even when the bargainer is a son dealing with his own father.'

Now, this was not an entirely fair remark on the part of Sir Sykes, and Jasper could not but feel that this was so. The baronet had taken it upon himself to force a wife upon his son, and the latter was, according to all precedent, entitled to expect compensation for the matrimonial sacrifice urged upon him. That he himself was not a model son, the former cavalry officer was well aware; but he did feel that in this matter of the match with Miss Ruth Willis he was hardly used.

'I don't know about bargaining,' said Jasper.

Most men, and many women, have moral natures so oddly tempered that in them vanity takes the precedence of self-interest; and that it is all but impossible to abstain from resenting a reproach or rebutting an accusation, even if meekness would be the most immediately profitable policy. Philosophers, no doubt with the example of Socrates before their mental retina, can exercise due self-control; and servants—albeit they never heard of the Porch or of the white-robed group of eager disciples jostling round the sage, or of shrill-voiced Xantippe—learn practical philosophy, and can bear to be blamed for what they never did, perhaps reflecting on the many undiscovered peccadilloes that balance the account.

But Jasper, who had not had the advantage of a servant's training, could not help the exculpating of himself from the charge of 'bargaining' with his father, albeit, even as he spoke, he felt his languid pulses quicken at the idea of being promoted to the permanent position of heir-presumptive of Carbery Chase. The words which Sir Sykes had spoken must surely imply a design to yield in that matter of the entail; and as heir of entail, a new career and new possibilities would open before Jasper Denzil.

'I don't know about bargaining,' said Jasper, in an injured tone. Sir Sykes, however, did not take up the ball of contention, and there was silence for a little space. The baronet was the first to speak.

'Old Lord Harrogate's splendid bequest,' he said, in a low wearied voice, 'has brought with it little happiness. I smile now, when I recall the exultation, half incredulous, with which I first learned that I was master of Carbery and its great rent-roll—I, who had been used to consider money as the one thing needful. Poverty—the poverty of aristocratic beggars, such as were your grandfather and myself—is a stern schoolmaster. I believed in wealth, till I had it.'

Jasper felt a faint thrill of genuine sympathy as he hearkened to the sad, almost heart-broken tone in which his father spoke. He said nothing, however, and indeed scarcely knew what to say. It was true enough that Sir Sykes had led but a sequestered and restricted life, with so many opportunities for worldly gratification; but this the ex-Lancer had always set down to eccentricity or a disordered liver. The popular belief which attributed the baronet's morose melancholy to his early bereavement, had never seemed to Jasper other than mythical.

'Ill-got gains,' said Sir Sykes, pursuing his train of thought, 'do not, they say, prosper. Mine were not strictly ill got. The great inheritance that fell to me was not won by dark and crooked means, not even by time-serving and cajolery. I am blameless as regards that. But I do assure

you, my son, that if I had the power to put back the hands of Time's inexorable dial, and be young again, with creditors clutching at the price of my commission, and duns besetting me at every turn, I would cheerfully give up Carbery, to be once more the needy man I was when I left India.'

This really seemed to Jasper so very unreasonable, that he did not know how to reply. His notion was that there were, for a gentleman of high degree, only two good and substantial grounds for unhappiness—an overdrawn balance, and the meeting with cold-shoulders and averted eyes in club and betting-ring. Still it was incumbent on him to make some reply.

'I think, sir,' he said, 'that a change would do you good—change of air, change of scene, and that sort of thing. Even a scamper over the continent would be delightful after the monotony of this'—he was going to say 'old jail,' but checked himself, and said—'style of existence' instead.

'All I can hope for now is to go down to my grave in quiet,' resumed Sir Sykes, ignoring his son's not ill-intended advice. 'I should not like my remaining years to be overshadowed by a cloud of shame, or to have Scorn's finger pointed at me. Believe me, Jasper, that when I ask you to offer your hand in marriage to Miss Willis I do not do so without a sufficient reason. It may be immaterial to you whether or not the finger of Reproach be directed against your father; but you cannot be indifferent to your own interest, and that is deeply concerned in your compliance with my urgent wishes. Here'—throwing it on the table—'is a draught of my instructions to Mr Wilkins. Your marriage settlements and the deed entailing the estate can, if you please, be signed on the same day.'

Jasper shrugged his shoulders with a deprecatory action, took up the paper, and glanced at its contents. Nothing could by possibility be more explicit. Carbery Chase with its broad acres was henceforth, like any other entailed estate, to pass from father to son according to the strictest rules of primogeniture. Entailers are prone to tie up their lands by will; but in this case the unusual expedient of a deed was to render Jasper's rights over the property independent of Sir Sykes's pleasure.

'Nothing could be more handsome, I must own,' said Jasper, a little sheepish in his deportment as he concluded the perusal.

'Say rather, that nothing could better prove the necessity of the case,' retorted the baronet peevishly. 'I presume, now that I have met your wishes, that you will no longer object to conform to mine.'

'You mean, sir, about Miss Willis?' asked Jasper, to be quite sure of his fact before pledging himself.

Sir Sykes nodded silently. What he underwent was probably undreamed of by his son, whose moral fibre was of a coarser quality. This unnatural bargaining, this higgling over a marriage on one hand and the reversion of an estate on the other, was to him absolute torture. He had set great store by men's opinion of him, had prized his fair renown and worldly reputation above all things, and now he felt himself humbled both in his own eyes and in Jasper's by the humiliating concession to which he had been brought.

'I am ready, sir,' said Jasper slowly, 'to submit

my judgment to yours in this business. After your great kindness'—here Sir Sykes made an impatient movement, but uttered no word—'I can do no less. Miss Willis, I have no doubt of it, will make an excellent wife, as wives go. I have to propose, however, and to be accepted, if I am.'

Sir Sykes did not appear inclined to discuss the probability of his son's proposals being rejected by his ward.

'You will have an ample income to begin with,' he said shortly; 'nor do I care how soon, in the course of nature, Carbery devolves upon you. Rest and peace, rest and peace! Could I but insure these for the short residue of my life, I should ask no more.'

'Well, well!' returned Jasper, with a blunt indifference to his father's feelings, of which he was himself but half aware. 'The women at any rate like a wedding, so Lucy and Blanche no doubt will be pleased to be bride's-maids. And we shall have to quarter the arms of Willis in the old Denzil escutcheon. By-the-by, what are the arms of Willis? It's odd how little I know of the fair Ruth's lineage.'

'Take my word for it,' said Sir Sykes, rising in anger, 'that the girl has good blood in her veins, better it may be than your own.' Having said which, the baronet left the room without a word of explanation.

'Particularly shady business,' soliloquised Jasper, when the door had closed upon his father. 'However, I am the slave of my word—when it's made worth my while—and I'll speak to Miss—Willis before I sleep.'

#### LIGHTNING.

Of all the risks to which mankind is exposed, there is probably none so inaccurately estimated as that of injury from lightning. The ordinary risks of life are calmly considered and truly appreciated; but the danger arising from the electrical disturbances which shew themselves in thunder-storms excites in many folks a feeling of dread that renders the mind incapable of the calm application needed to estimate a chance at its real value. Hence there is a tendency to magnify this danger, and the tendency is strong in proportion as the nervous system of the individual is weak and his imagination active. In other cases, the fear of danger is diminished by being habituated to it; so powerful indeed is the influence of habit in this respect, that in time our apprehensions vanish altogether, though their cause remain unabated.

There can be no doubt that the awe evoked by a thunder-storm is in some measure due to the singularly imposing character of the manifestations. A flash of lightning comes upon the eye with a rapidity and a vividness that cannot fail to impress the mind with the idea of tremendous force; and to deepen the impression, the flash is followed by a crashing peal of thunder, a sound that is alone in its grandeur. Thus our two chief senses are acted upon successively in a degree that is never otherwise reached. Another cause of the feeling of dread is ignorance of the nature of the agencies at work. To the scientific man, who sees in the storm the actions of a force with which he is familiar, obeying laws that to him are well

known, this cause is of little import. But to the man who is without this knowledge, the manifestations of this apparently irresistible force present themselves in a different light. The erratic course of the lightning suggests to his mind an uncontrolled power; a suggestion that, is repeated by the irregularity of the interval between the discharges, and the strangely destructive effects which these discharges sometimes occasion.

These are the causes of what may be described as the general dread of lightning, that apprehension which every one feels in some degree during the continuance of a thunder-storm. The degree, as we have already remarked, is determined by the nervous organisation of the individual and the strength of his imagination. But beyond this vague feeling of impending danger which all share in common, there is aroused in some persons by the outbreak of a thunder-storm an inordinate dread, an overpowering terror, that cannot be accounted for wholly in this way. The source of this exceptional fear of lightning is generally to be traced to early impressions. The imagination of the child has been violently and painfully excited. In the very tender years of life the imagination is extremely active, and the mind is particularly impressionable. The child that has been thrown into a state of terror by a supposed ghostly apparition will, especially if it be of a nervous temperament, carry a dread of supernatural appearances into mature life; and though the man may, by the force of his reason and will, repress the feeling, it will nevertheless arise whenever occasion for it recurs. There are few who do not suffer in this way from the indiscretion of nurse-girls or elder playmates, the undue fear of lightning being among the commonest evils induced by this means.

The causes of an excessive dread of lightning having been ascertained, the remedies are obvious. That degree of apprehension, hardly amounting to fear, which is occasioned by the nature of the phenomenon, admits of no modification; nor is it desirable that the moderate and proper sense of awe called forth by what is perhaps the grandest exhibition of natural forces, should be suppressed. But the evil of a fear arising from ignorance, and particularly of that excessive fear which is a source of disquietude and shame to those in whom it is found, calls for protest. As better than cure, prevention alone is to be looked to. Excessive dread is indeed hardly to be described as less than a malady which when once established admits of no cure. This fact should lead parents to take every possible care that no impressions of the character in question be made in early childhood. When the dread, however, arises from simple ignorance, all that is needed is to remove the ignorance. It is with this object in view that we offer a few plain remarks on the nature of lightning and on the laws which it obeys.

When a cloud becomes charged with electricity, the earth also becomes charged in a like degree with electricity of an opposite kind; if the cloud is charged 'positively,' as it is termed in technical language, the earth is charged 'negatively.' The air between the cloud and the earth acts as the dielectric or non-conducting substance which keeps the two kinds of electricity apart. This arrangement of two charged conducting surfaces separated

by a non-conducting substance constitutes what is known as a 'condenser,' a familiar example of which is found in the Leyden jar. When a condenser is charged, the electricities upon the opposite surfaces have a tendency to get together, and the tendency becomes stronger as the 'charge' or quantity of electricity increases. The force which impels the two electricities together is known to men of science as 'electro-motive force,' and the state which it sets up is called 'tension.' It is easy to see that if the tension goes on increasing by an accumulation of electricity on the separated surfaces, there must come a time when it will equal and exceed the resistance offered by the intervening stratum of air. When this time comes, the electricities pass through the air to each other, from the cloud to the earth, and from the earth to the cloud. But as the resistance to be overcome is very great—air offering much greater resistance to objects traversing it than most people would suppose—much heat is generated, and this heat shews itself in the flash which we call lightning. Thus the lightning-flash is the visible manifestation of the heat generated by the passage of the electricities through the air. It is a well-known scientific fact that electricity always chooses the path that offers to it the least resistance; and, as in the case of lightning, this point or path is continually changing, in consequence of the motion of the cloud and other varying circumstances, the successive discharges occur in different places.

It will now be readily perceived why tall buildings, such as church spires, are more liable to be 'struck,' to use the common expression, than structures of a less height. Buildings may be constructed, wholly or in part, of substances possessing greater conducting power than the air, and as they rise to considerable distances above the earth's surface, they lessen by so much the thickness of the stratum of air to be traversed, and diminish in a corresponding degree the resistance to be overcome between cloud and earth. Of two edifices equally conductive, the higher will thus occasion the greater reduction of resistance, and consequently the discharge will take place directly over this building, and through it to and from the ground. The effects of the passage of electricity through the building will be determined by the degree of conductivity possessed by the latter, or in other words, by the resistance it offers. If it be constructed of metal, or if it have a continuous piece of metal running through it from top to bottom, the electric charge will pass without causing in it any visible effect, because little or no resistance is opposed. For this reason, buildings, as the reader doubtless knows, have often affixed to them for their protection a metal rod called a lightning-conductor. But if there be no metal employed in the construction of the building, or if the metal used be in separate and detached pieces, there will be great resistance to be overcome, and the force required to overcome it may be sufficient to cause the destruction of the building, or at least the displacement of those parts where the resistance is greatest. The heat generated by the passage of electricity through badly conducting substances is often great enough to set combustible materials on fire.

Instead of a building, the object causing the

diminution of resistance may be a tree. The moisture contained in a living tree renders it a moderately good conductor of electricity, and on that account it is more likely to attract lightning than an ordinary stone building. So also the human body, which is a better conductor than a tree, may by occupying a favourable situation become part of the line of least resistance; in such a case the passage of the electric charge will take place through it, as it did through the tree and the building. But since both the tree and the human or any other animal body possess a low degree of conductivity, the consequent force exerted may cause their destruction. Thus we see that a body is 'struck' when it becomes part of a line of least resistance; and from a consideration of the foregoing facts, we are able to perceive when a body is likely to become part of that line. We also see that good conductors, such as the metals, are unaltered by the passage of the charge through them; while imperfect conductors, such as trees and animal bodies, are either injured or destroyed by it. The electric fluid revenges itself, as it were, upon whatever offers resistance to its course.

We may now endeavour to ascertain under what conditions damage from lightning is possible, and what are the means by which the risk may be lessened or avoided. An isolated tree, standing either upon a wide plain or upon an eminence, is obviously likely to determine a lightning discharge, to 'attract the lightning,' to use a common expression. The top of the tree is the nearest point to the cloud; and since the tree is a better conductor than the air, a line drawn vertically through it to the cloud marks the shortest and easiest course along which the electricities may pass. If, when the charged cloud arrives directly over this point, the tension is sufficient to overcome the resistance along that line, a discharge will take place, and the tree will be struck. But if the tension be not sufficient, the cloud will pass harmlessly over. Hence it appears that a person standing during a thunder-storm beneath a tree so situate is exposed to some risk. On no account, therefore, should the traveller take refuge under an isolated tree; generally he will do well to avoid its neighbourhood altogether; but should he be overtaken by the storm when on a plain with no shelter near, the tree may still be made to afford him some protection. If he take up a position near it, but not under its branches, he will probably escape unhurt should the lightning descend upon it. The safest distance from the tree is that which is equal to its height. To approach much nearer than this is to incur the risk of being within the influence of the stroke; to remain at a much greater distance away is to place one's self in the same conditions of isolation as the tree itself. It will have been remarked by all observers of the phenomenon that whenever a tree has been struck by lightning it has generally occupied an isolated position. In describing the position as one of isolation, however, it is not meant that the tree is necessarily standing alone, but that it is not one of a numerous group. When there are many trees together, their collective conductivity is often sufficient to cause an indestructive discharge of the electricity. This is especially likely to happen when the trees are wet with rain, for then their surfaces are covered with a film of water, which is

a good conductor. For this reason, the danger from lightning is much less after rain has begun to fall, than before when everything is dry.

It appears, therefore, that the safest situation during a thunder-storm is in the midst of a wood, particularly if the neighbourhood of the tallest trees be avoided. In such a place of shelter, the traveller may take refuge in full assurance that he will there be effectually shielded from harm. The greatest risk of injury from lightning is undoubtedly incurred by persons travelling across a wide and very flat plain, because in such a situation they are the only elevated objects. To lessen the risk, which may here be somewhat serious, advantage should be taken of whatever undulations of surface may exist, to keep upon the lowest ground. No doubt the prostrate position would in these circumstances afford greater security than the erect.

It happens not unfrequently that animals are killed by lightning under a tree to which they had betaken themselves for shelter. In these cases, the tree is struck partly in consequence of its isolation, and partly on account of the presence of the animals beneath it. Usually there are several and often many of them assembled together, huddled probably by terror into contact one with another. The air, heated by their bodies, rises above them laden with moisture, derived mainly from their breath. Who has not noticed the cloud of vapour that in the early morning and in certain states of the weather hangs over a flock of sheep or a herd of kine? The column of moist air ascending through the branches of the tree towards the cloud, offers, in consequence of the comparatively high conductivity of water, a favourable passage for the electricity. A herd of cattle under an isolated tree is thus exposed to a double risk; also it is evident that these animals are in the open country less secure from injury than human beings, who cannot affect the atmosphere in a like degree.

The danger from lightning in a dwelling-house is exceedingly small. The materials used in building are, with the sole exception of the metals, very bad conductors; and the form of a house is not that which is favourable to the reception of an electric charge. Towers and spires, the latter especially, possess that form; but these structures are nearly always protected by conductors affixed to them. It has been suggested that chimneys may, through the conductivity of their soot-lining, attract lightning. But as communication with moist earth is interrupted below the fireplace, the influence of the soot in diminishing the total resistance is compensated. A house around the roof of which there is a system of water-pipes reaching to the ground is very effectually protected. The timid may, however, put their fears to rest by affixing a conductor to the highest chimney, and taking care that the lower end be carried sufficiently deep into the ground to be always in moist earth.

A consideration of the preceding facts leads to the conclusion, that the risk of personal injury from lightning is necessarily small. The conditions favourable to the occurrence of accidents are few, and of such a nature that the combinations requisite for their fulfilment cannot often take place. There are but two situations in which danger is to be apprehended—namely on the

portions of a flat district that are destitute of trees; and beneath the branches of an isolated tree standing in a spot that is not dominated at a short distance by higher ground. But even here the danger is not necessarily certain, for thunder-clouds do not by any means invariably discharge to the ground.

The infrequency of accident from lightning is known alike to those who are ignorant of the laws which the storm obeys, and to those who can correctly estimate the risk from a full understanding of the circumstances and conditions under which its forces are set in action. This knowledge should alone go far towards shewing how exaggerated are the alarms felt by the timid. But small as is the risk, it may be made still less by an observance of the precautions which have been here pointed out. Attention to these will give almost perfect security to the person; and a knowledge of this fact, combined with the ability to accurately estimate the amount of risk in all circumstances, should relieve the mind of painful apprehensions.

#### ANOTHER TALE OF HOMBURG.

My friend Karl Otto Fichte had been for many years at the head of the medical practice at Homburg. He had studied in London, was married to an Englishwoman, and had formed another bond of love for all things English in a devoted admiration of Shakspeare, whose difficulties and beauties he was in the habit of discussing in papers contributed to the *Jahrbücher* of the German Shakspeare Society. His love of children was such as is perhaps only that of kind-hearted husbands who are childless, and was illustrated by the countless portraits which, together with cases of stuffed birds, covered so many of his walls. For some years I was in the habit of passing my short holiday at Homburg for the sake of my old fellow-student's society. After our pipes were lit at night, Doctor Fichte told me many a story of the worst side of the bad specimens of humanity, flocking to a spot in order to repair self-abused constitutions, and to feed their wild hopes of restoring broken fortunes. Always marked as his sketches were by the meanness and corruption with which the confirmed gambler's whole nature festers, they were here and there relieved by some little touch of goodness or beauty, that threw into deeper shade the main features of the subject. The Doctor was at his best when a child was one of his characters, as in the story of the Martyns recorded in these columns (October 17, 1874). The following narrative, which has long lingered in my memory, contains, I think, sufficient interest, simple as it is, to point a moral. I give it in Dr Fichte's own words.

A few summers ago, my wife's attention was much drawn to an English couple frequenting the public resorts here. The husband seemed about fifty years of age, much broken in health and spirits, but bearing in his face the impress of ability and mental culture. His mean attire and unhealthy look contrasted strangely with the faultless dress and self-possessed mien of the wife, and with the bonniness of a little girl of some three years, their never-failing companion, whose

rosy cheeks, bright honest eyes, and winsome naturalness were as much opposed to the broken-down appearance of the one parent as to the glossy self-consciousness of the other. Fondness for the child, however, seemed to be their common virtue; and the group sufficiently interested the crowd of dawdlers to form a point of some attraction in the gardens and at the Brunnen. Shy and somewhat nervous towards strangers, the little girl rather repelled the advances of most admirers, preferring to form steadier friendships with the officials of the Kurhaus and the girls serving at the springs. The father, shortly after I had first heard of him, came to consult me; when I was not long in determining that his yellow withered face, glassy deep-sunk eyes, and lame gait betokened a confirmed use of opium. It was the usual story he had to tell. Adopted as a cure for severe neuralgic pain, the drug from a remedy grew into a pleasure, and ripened into a necessity. The particulars I learned from him from time to time, which I was able to supplement subsequently by his wife's narrative, will shew what manner of patient I had to treat, and how far I could look to the wife for aid in effecting his cure.

George Evenden—as I will call him—after some years' practice at the English bar, had been appointed to a judgeship in Jamaica soon after his marriage. Though a clever and accomplished man, he was too idle and self-indulgent to make any sure progress in an arduous profession at home; and distasteful though the exile was to him, he did not hesitate to accept the proffered appointment in the West Indies, where a few months later he was joined by his wife and first-born child. Hitherto the married life of the Evendens had not been altogether a happy one. Mrs Evenden, the only child of a naval officer, left motherless as an infant, had known no other home than the occasional shelter of the houses of relatives during her holidays from school. Handsome, clever, and ambitious as a school-girl, she, to her credit, grew into an accomplished woman, in every way fitted for the life of hard dependence which she had foreseen would be her lot. With strong health, remarkable coolness of nerve, and great powers of fascination, she was unable to disguise from those who sought to be her real friends that she had a cold heart and somewhat lax principles. Such was Harriet Merton, when at twenty years of age she met Evenden during the assizes in a town in the south of England. A short acquaintance irregularly formed led to an engagement of marriage, and in place of starting in life as a governess, she speedily became the wife of a man double her age. Both soon owned to themselves that they had made a mistake. Entirely opposed to his wife in character, tastes, and views of life, Evenden, naturally fickle, grew disappointed and angry with himself for marrying, caring not to win the esteem of a woman whom he had never really loved; while she, absorbed in herself, never even tried to love a man whom she did not respect for worldly eminence. The birth of a child, as a new pleasure shared by both parents, produced for a time a happier feeling between them; but soon the wife tired of her new duties, became discontented with her uncongenial surroundings; while Evenden, alienated by her want of sympathy, by nature faint-hearted, drifted into bad habits, and losing his health through

intemperance, sought relief in the besotting remedy of opium.

Necessarily resigning his post as judge, he took to coffee-planting, with the natural result of failing in an occupation that left him free to indulge in a vicious habit. Harriet, who cared for her children—of which there were then two—only so far as they did credit to her own talents and attractions, occupied herself in shining in the society of the adjoining camp at Newcastle, and was by no means delighted at the thought of returning to England; a step which, long advised by medical friends, was at last decided on by the unusual outbreak of yellow fever among the troops, whose cantonment of tents, dotted picturesquely among tree-ferns and plantains on the mountainsides, had nearly touched the inclosure of Evenden's house. The death of their eldest child on the passage home seems to have awakened the father to a sense of his physical and moral debasement; and he had come here with the evidently honest intention of throwing off his evil habit. Harriet too had been steadied by her loss, and was able to find genuine amusement at any rate in seeing little Violet happy.

The first thing I endeavoured to impress upon my patient was the necessity of strict truthfulness in his confidences with me on the subject of his habit, for I knew by experience that the deceit of opium-eaters is one of the hardest points that we have to assail in attempting their cure; secondly, that the task of curing himself was one that *could* be accomplished; next, that for some weeks he must be prepared for much suffering, which it was out of the power of any doctor directly to alleviate; and lastly, I urged him of all things never to give up the smallest ground gained in the struggle. The administration of the opium was to be under Mrs Evenden's sole control, the very place of its keeping to be concealed from him. His usual daily allowance of eighty grains was to be at once reduced to sixty grains, divided into four equal portions; the end of the first week was to see it reduced to forty grains; the end of the second week to twenty grains; and so on until the fortieth day, which I fixed for its entire abandonment. I prescribed valerian and bromide of potassium, and advised a moderate indulgence in tobacco.

For the first few days my patient suffered but little beyond extreme restlessness and inability to sleep, and there was even then apparent a slight improvement in his health and spirits; but in the second week he began to be racked by pain, that rising beneath the shoulder-blades, crept up over neck, ear, and eye, while he seemed, he said, to be on fire all over his body just beneath the skin. The only sleep he could now get was a change from the reality of bodily torture to a vivid succession of ghastly dreams ending in some fearful catastrophe, that roused him, bathed in perspiration from sole to crown. The third and fourth weeks were, as I had anticipated, his worst time. Each hour had for him the duration of a day; each day seemed strangely prolonged into a period that knew no reckoning. Never free from acute pain, he was perpetually on the move, and if he tried to sit, he was instantly impelled to shift from chair to chair. His irritability became almost maniacal, and often he told me would he bite his tongue till the blood

came, in the effort to master it. Impatient of the slightest contradiction, he was, though very rarely, almost unkind to his much-loved child, who was as much with him as I allowed her to be during this trying time. 'Dear little father'—as she was wont to call him—'dear little father, can you have me?' was a frequent query I heard outside his door. On entering and finding him tearing up and down the room with hot flushed cheeks, she would try to stop him with the plaintive words: 'Father, do you love me? Yes; you do love me a little bit; now you tell me about Beauty and the Beast;' and the two were at once on the floor, pouring over some gorgeous picture-book. Then when the father could sit still no longer, Violet would mount his back, and order him to career across the room, kissing him on each cheek for being her 'dear old horse.' Or clasping her round the waist with his fingers locked in front of her, he would swing her backwards and forwards between his legs till the pair were breathless. Once when his irritability overcame him, and he addressed her rather less tenderly than usual as 'Child!' with the blood mantling in her cheeks, she went up to a large looking-glass, and having carefully smoothed her hair, running up to him, smothered his hand with kisses, and said: 'No, father; I'm your little maiden now; look!' alluding, I found, to an old flirtation between the pair of lovers, in which the designation was derived from a certain arrangement of hair. The poor man clasped her passionately in his arms, and then sinking on to a sofa, burst into an irrepressible flood of tears.

We had reached the end of the fourth week. The opium was reduced to five grains a day, distributed into ten portions; the appetite had become enormous, and the walking powers unabated. The deficiency of sleep was great, and the liver much disordered; but I had great hopes of success, for I saw that my patient was honestly doing battle with his enemy. Five weeks had passed; growing feebler, he could not wind up his watch, or guide a pen without the assistance of the other hand, and complained especially of a constant cold perspiration down the spine. His pulse was slow and heavy, the face flushed, and fingers swollen. At last, after two days' allowance of half a grain, the fortieth day was passed absolutely without opium.

Was the victory won? There is, as you doubtless know, one great point of advantage that attends the attempted cure of opium-eating, as compared with that of excessive drinking, or even tobacco-smoking, and this is that there is no *specific* desire for the drug as pleasurable. The patient yearns for freedom from pain, but the opium is not an object of craving for its own delights, as is the drunkard's dram or the forbidden pipe. But though I had believed that Evenden's desire to be cured was sincere, I had been glad to know that his wife kept the drug, and that the key of the drawer was on the *châtelaine* by her side. I would that I could have trusted her for that natural support which a wife could render in guiding her husband from the danger of a relapse. But I had been troubled by her constant absence from home, and so it was but rarely that I could see her to give my necessary instructions. Incredible as it had seemed to me, she at once opposed the plan I now suggested of taking her husband away

for a few days' change of scene. A little later I was enlightened as to much that puzzled me in her.

One night after supper, on entering one of the rooms of the Kurhaus, I was attracted by a knot of by-standers absorbed in watching the play of a lady seated at the roulette table. It was Harriet Evenden, whose child I had found but three hours ago trying to comfort her father, as he lay racked on a sofa, with a favourite story told in her own words. Most elegantly dressed, without a sign of excitement on her handsome features, Mrs Evenden was watching the fortunes of five napoleons, which she had pushed on *à cheval* to the line separating the zero from one of the adjacent numbers. *Messieurs, faites le jeu. Le jeu est-il fait? Rien ne va plus* (Gentlemen, make your game. Is the game made? No more is staked); and the ivory ball tumbled into the compartment bearing the same number as one of those touched by the five napoleons. The croupier, after settling other gains and losses, counted out seventeen times five gold pieces; and the winner, raking up her ninety napoleons as coolly as they had been dealt to her, proceeded apparently to cast up on a card the result of her ventures. I left, distressed by what was to me a very sorry sight indeed. The difficulty of Evenden's permanent cure was to my mind enormously increased, not only because her pursuit would make her forgetful of, perhaps indifferent to his vice, but because the knowledge of her conduct, if disapproved of by him, was the very thing to snap his weak powers of self-control. More than once, when we had been talking over the practice of gambling here, he had—I then remembered—congratulated himself on being too poor to play. 'I have never been a gambler, Doctor,' he said, 'and I trust that this one virtue will not leave me.' And as I thought of their dear little Violet, I quite shuddered over my own forecast.

After much perplexing thought, I determined to speak to Mrs Evenden on the subject of her playing, though the task of reforming a gambler seemed yet more uncertain than that of curing an opium-eater. The next afternoon, when I had seen her husband in the gardens seated near the band, with Violet close by, making friends with some young soldiers, I made my way to their house in the Untere Promenade, and found, as I had thought probable, Harriet away from home. After shutting a little gate on the balcony, which opening outwards down a steep flight of steps, I had always looked upon as a possible source of danger for the child, I hastened to the Kurhaus, and found Mrs Evenden at the roulette table, as before the centre of some little attraction. On seeing me, she bowed as composedly as if she had met me in the gardens, and went on with her play. Getting round to her side, I begged her to come out; and on returning to her house, I openly remonstrated with her on the subject of gambling. Without the slightest discomposure of manner, and in perfect good-temper, she entered on the particulars of her married life that I have given you, told me that she had sought in the distraction of play a substitute for home pleasures, and the means of indulging tastes denied her by the habits of a husband whom she could not respect. After a long conversation, during which I spoke plainly and sometimes warmly, I left with her promise to

accompany her husband and my wife in a ten days' expedition that I had planned for them in the Black Forest, and to forsake the Kurhaus for the few days pending their departure.

Shattered, feeble, and suffering though Evenden still was, I felt very confident that time and self-control only were needed to restore him to health and vigour. Happy enough he seemed too when, two days later, at a very early hour, I caught sight of the inseparable pair just outside the town, Violet in wild delight mounted on one of our little dog-drawn milk-carts, urging on the dog and beaming with merriment. 'You see me, Doctor. I'm Peggy in the low-backed car. My fluffy kitten is the chicken Peggy is picking. Little Father's the lover who envies the chicken. You be the man at the turnpike bar, and scratch your old poll.' And then we all three went through the whole ditty of that charming Irish song *The Low-backed Car*, to the amused wonderment of the kind owner of the cart. Dear child! Happy in the ignorance of her parents' faults, might she never have occasion to rue them, and above all never wear the fetters that mind and body forge for themselves out of vice!

In the afternoon of the self-same day, as I was dismissing my last patient, Mrs Evenden entered this room. With an air of almost contemptuous triumph, she told me in unmoved accents that her husband had got at some opium that morning while she was out; that she had returned home to find him playing and talking with Violet with an incoherent wildness, which after some hours had given place to heavy stupor, in which she had just left him. As far as she could gather from the child's account, her husband had taken the opium out of a little ivory box which Violet had discovered in the depths of a work-basket, and begged him to unscrew for her. This box, in which Evenden used to carry his pocket-board of the drug, had been long missing, and had been by my desire the object of much search. As I feared possible, the sudden temptation had broken down the resistance of weeks. Driving at once to their house, on entering the drawing-room I found the unhappy man stretched on the sofa in heavy torpor, broken only by an occasional convulsive twitching in his face and limbs. The furniture was in wild disorder, and littered about were dolls, toys, rugs, and various articles of dress, as though father and daughter had been acting some favourite nursery story. While engaged in rousing Evenden from a stupor, which by its rapid increase, together with the ghastly features and almost imperceptible pulse, marked the large quantity of the dose, I heard his wife outside the door asking for Violet. 'Is she not with her father, madam?' answered the servant. At that moment, instinctively my eye caught sight of the open balcony-gate. With a fearful thought I bounded outside and looked down into the garden. In another moment I was by the side of Violet, lying at the foot of the steps with her Red-Riding-Hood cloak tumbled over her head—still and silent in the beauty of a painless death. The neck had been broken in the fall, and her little spirit had taken its flight in calm and sinless peace. Probably after the morning's wild fun was over, and the horrid poison had had its full play, Violet failing to rouse her father from his unconscious state, had run out frightened to the balcony, to look or call for help, and rushing

against the treacherous gate, had fallen headlong below. When Evenden, on awaking from the prolonged sleep which followed the stupor, asked for Violet, I told him that, though he had failed in resisting the sudden onslaught of his foe, I was now certain of his final victory over opium; for she who had been his loving comrade in his first effort, would henceforth, as his ministering angel, gird him with fresh strength for the last assault.

And I was not wrong. When we had strewed the sad little grave with flowers, Mrs Evenden left Homburg on a visit to England, and her husband took up his abode with me. This time the hope of cure was assured by his abiding sorrow. After six months' sojourn he left me, a wholly different man from the invalid I had at first known. Still bearing of course some effects of the long self-indulgence, he had a look of strength and patient endurance that foretold the certainty of a lasting cure. The light had departed from his day; but he was truly a wiser and better man. Harriet Evenden, sobered by their loss, reformed the defects, if unable to change the nature of her character. In the village where they have fixed their home by the sea, they have from small beginnings established a cottage hospital for convalescent children; and by the wife's able management and exertions, the husband, in his fondness for the little patients, is able to perpetuate his enduring love for her who had been for three short years the one sweetness of a self-bittered life.

#### THE AMERICAN ARCTIC EXPEDITION.

UNDISMAYED by past reverses, but rather incited by them to renewed efforts, America is now contemplating a fresh expedition to the North Pole, Mr James Gordon Bennett, the enterprising proprietor of the *New York Herald*, being its chief promoter. As to the motives which actuate Mr Bennett in this fresh instance of energy, it is no part of our purpose to inquire. From whatever cause, Mr Bennett is the moving spirit in the undertaking now on foot; and he is ably seconded by an officer of merit and experience, Captain Howgate. This gentleman has given his enthusiastic adherence to the project, and will in all probability take, if he has not already assumed, command of the expedition. Our readers will be aware that the government of the United States has been asked to enrol into its service and commission with its authority a band of picked officers and men, and to allow the steamer *Pandora* to sail under the American flag upon a Polar expedition. The Senate has expressed approval of the project, and passed a bill to appropriate fifty thousand dollars towards the expenses; and there is little doubt entertained that Congress will ratify with its formal sanction a scheme so powerfully supported. Possibly before these lines appear in print the consent may have been given. Some brief particulars therefore of the mode in which the expedition is to be managed may not be without interest to English readers.

The object of this expedition is to settle a colony of hardy and resolute men at some favourable point on the borders of the Polar Sea, and to provide it with all modern appliances for overcoming the physical obstacles in the pathway

to the Pole, and for resisting the effects of cold, sickness, and isolation. This is in accordance with the recommendation of the German government Commission, which again is based on the plan advocated by Lieutenant Weyprecht. The locality to be selected for such a station, moreover, is also that mentioned by Weyprecht—namely the eastern shore of Greenland. Captain Howgate has chosen as the site of the proposed colony the shore of Lady Franklin Bay, having been influenced in his selection by a circumstance of supreme importance—the fact that a seam of coal was found existing there and easily workable when the *Discovery*, under Captain Nares, visited the place. The theory upon which this station is to be established is both simple and plausible; but it remains to be seen whether it will work out so neatly in practice as it does on paper. We will quote Captain Howgate's own words, as communicated to the *New York Herald*. He says: 'When Captain Hall reached the upper extremity of Robeson's Channel, the look-out of the *Polaris* reported open water in sight and just beyond the pack which surrounded the vessel and impeded further progress. This open water was afterwards seen from the Cape at the northern opening of Newman's Bay; and it was the opinion of the crew of the ill-fated vessel that if she had been but the fraction of an hour earlier in reaching the channel, they could have steamed unobstructed to the Pole itself or to the shores of such lands, if any exist, as may bound the so-called open Polar Sea. We know that they did not succeed, but were forced to winter almost within sight of this sea; and subsequently disheartened by the loss of their gallant commander, abandoned the enterprise. Where this open water was found, Captain Nares, in 1875 and 1876, found solid impenetrable ice, through which no vessel could force its way, and over which it was equally impossible for sledge-parties to work. These facts appear to shew that within the Arctic Circle the seasons vary as markedly as in more temperate southern latitudes, and that the icy barriers to the Pole are sometimes broken up by favouring winds and temperature. To get farther north or to reach the Pole, prompt advantage must be taken of such favouring circumstances; and to do this with the least expenditure of time, money, and human life, it is essential that the exploring party be on the ground at the very time the ice gives way and opens the gateway to the long-sought prize. Hence the idea of having a colony of navigators at hand ready at this opportunity to take advantage of it.'

So speaks Captain Howgate; but if we are to pay him the compliment of crediting him with anything like an accurate knowledge of his subject, it must be confessed that there is a difficulty in reconciling his theory with the experience of Captain Nares upon this question of an 'open Polar Sea.' So far from discovering any signs of occasional dispersion of the massive and rugged pack-ice, and the consequent 'breaking up of the icy barriers to the Pole,' Captain Nares found ice 'of unusual age and thickness;' so remarkable in its nature as to lead to the general opinion that it was the accumulation of many years if not centuries, that the sea was never open, and that progress through it or over it to the Pole was impossible with our present resources. Impressed firmly

with this conviction, Captain Nares gave to the huge barrier which stopped the way the name of the 'Sea of Ancient Ice;' or in terms savouring less of romance and more of hard geological science, the Palæocrystic Sea. On the other hand, Captain Howgate's view is shared by no less practised an explorer than Dr Hayes, who says boldly that in his opinion Captain Nares's Palæocrystic Sea is 'a simple absurdity,' and who strongly advocates the formation of a colony at some point in Smith Sound, from which, when the opportunity came, a dash for the Pole could be made.

Leaving our readers, however, to dispose in the manner which may be most satisfactory to themselves of this contradiction of authorities upon the vexed question of the open Polar Sea, we may proceed to less debatable ground, and state how the remote little colony is to be kept in a state of efficiency and health. The men are to take with them a good supply of materials for the erection of strong and substantial buildings to withstand the terrible cold to which they will be subjected. They are to have medicines, plenty of provisions, sledges and dogs for hunting and local exploring, and all the facilities possible for rendering existence as comfortable as their isolation and the low temperature will permit. They will be under a system of strict discipline, for experience in all Arctic expeditions has proved to demonstration over and over again how essential this is to a successful prosecution of work. It is also proposed to establish at Cape Union, nearly a degree farther north, and where the *Alert* found her winter-quarters, a subsidiary colony, with which a telegraphic communication is to be maintained.

After the return of the Nares expedition, the recital of the difficulties experienced in crossing the Palæocrystic Sea speedily gave rise to a suggestion that since it was impossible to travel along the surface, it might be feasible to pass over it. In other words, the expediency of pressing balloons into service came before the minds of experts, and received a very general and favourable consideration. It seems likely that some practical application of the suggestion will be attempted. Professor Samuel King, a distinguished American aeronaut, has entered upon a series of experiments with a view of determining the practicability of using balloons at the temperature and under the climatic influences of the Arctic regions. A great, indeed the principal difficulty is at once obviated by the fortunate discovery of coal at the site of the proposed colony, and the successful manufacture of the gas may be taken as a *fait accompli*; but the question of suitable material for the covering of the balloon itself is one of grave moment, although the Professor is sanguine of ultimately solving that problem. A French aeronaut, M. de Fonvielle, is also experimentalising in the same direction, and is similarly hopeful of success.

In some general observations upon the scheme, Captain Howgate remarks that the failure of the admirably equipped Nares expedition is, in his opinion, due in great measure to the abnormally cold season and the exceptional character of the winds, which had resulted in the formation of ice-ridges running across the line of march; thus making progress difficult, slow, and dangerous.

It would have accomplished much, however, if it had done nothing more than determine the existence of coal at the *Discovery's* winter-quarters; and instead of discouraging fresh efforts, the result of the expedition should stimulate explorers of the Arctic regions to further endeavours. The unfavourable meteorological conditions encountered by Captain Nares and his gallant band may not exist during the present season, and indeed may not occur again for several years. The scheme has received the hearty commendation and support of well-known Arctic explorers, amongst whom may be named Captain Kennedy, Captain Markham, Dr Hayes, Lieutenant Payer, and Dr John Rae, and the officers and crew of the *Polaris*; and scientific men, naval officers, and private citizens throughout the United States are not less unanimous in their support and encouragement.

Whatever may be the results of the expedition, Englishmen, we feel sure, will unite in regarding it with generous and sympathetic interest and in heartily wishing it success.

#### EQUAL TO THE OCCASION.

WHEN Lord Liverpool was forming his ministry in 1822, he thought it absolutely necessary to have Canning at the Foreign Office, although aware the appointment would be obnoxious to George IV. The Duke of Wellington undertook the unpleasant task of communicating Lord Liverpool's determination, and went to Brighton for that purpose. As soon as the king knew what was wanted of him, he broke out: 'Arthur, it is impossible! I said, on my honour as a gentleman, he should never be one of my ministers again. I am sure you will agree with me that I cannot do what I said on my honour as a gentleman I would not do.' Another man would have been silenced; but the great soldier, always equal to an emergency, replied: 'Pardon me, sir, but I don't agree with you at all. Your Majesty is not a gentleman.' The bold assertion startled the king; but the Duke went on: 'Your Majesty is not a gentleman, but the Sovereign of England, with duties to your people far above any to yourself; and these duties render it imperative that you should employ the abilities of Mr Canning.' 'Well, Arthur,' said the king, drawing a long breath, 'if I must, I must.'

Although he did not like being told he was no gentleman, George IV. had once at least, while Regent, forgotten he was one. That was when he flung a glass of wine in Colonel Hamlyn's face, with: 'Hamlyn, you are a blackguard!' The insulted officer could not return the compliment without committing something like treason; it was out of the question to challenge the Prince; while to let the insult pass unnoticed was equally impossible. The colonel filled his glass and threw the contents in the face of his neighbour, saying: 'His Royal Highness's toast; pass it on!' 'Hamlyn,' cried the Regent, 'you're a capital fellow! Here's your health!' And they were fast friends from that evening.

A Schleswig lass, whose betrothed had gone to seek a better fortune in America, under promise

to send for her as soon as he found himself able to support a wife, after patiently waiting a few years, grew sick of hope deferred, and took up with another sweetheart. She was no sooner fairly on with the new love, when a letter arrived from the old one, inclosing money to pay her passage to America. Here was a pretty dilemma; but the doubly-plighted damsel's mother found a way out of the difficulty. She sent out her second daughter in her sister's place. 'The two girls,' said she, 'are as like as two blades of grass, and it will be all one to him which of them he gets for a wife.' For the sake of all parties, it is to be hoped the cheated man was as easily victimised as the Spanish official who stopped the correspondent of an English newspaper attempting to cross the Republican lines, during the Civil War of 1874, with a demand for his passport—a non-existent document. 'Specials' are not readily prevented going where they have a mind to go, and the demand was met by the production of a fashionable tailor's bill, bearing the arms of sundry royal and imperial patrons on its face, and duly stamped and receipted. A pretty pantomimic performance ensued, the journalist trying to impress upon the official mind that the figures in the account represented his personal measurements, set down for the purpose of identification; and having succeeded in that, he pointed triumphantly to the stamp and the signature across it, as irrefragable proof of the official character of the document; and the half-satisfied, wholly mystified Spaniard let him go on his way, showering silent blessings on his tailor's head.

An unemployed actor, disinclined to rust in idleness, to say nothing of starving, determined to 'do the provinces' as an entertainer. The provinces, however, did not prove the happy hunting-ground he expected, and when he arrived at a certain small town in the north, his funds and his spirits were equally low. The latter were not raised by the worthy who had the letting of the 'hall' informing him a theatrical exhibition would be 'nae gude at a' there; but that if he gave a lecture on chemistry the place would be crowded. At this straw our desperate actor clutched. He would turn scientific lecturer, and chance it being discovered that he knew nothing of his subject. The hall was engaged, the bills distributed, his last coppers spent upon red-fire, brick-dust, iron-filings and some innocent powders; the time came, and the lecturer stood before a crowded audience, without any clear idea of what he was to say or do, save that he was going to perform the old experiment of producing hydrogen, and a new one of his own invention, which he hoped would bring the performance to a sudden end. The friendly hall-keeper had borrowed a pestle and mortar, a Leyden jar and two or three retorts, which with a few phisic bottles filled with bright-coloured waters, gave the table quite a scientific appearance. The pseudo-savant commenced by reading a few pages of a popular treatise on chemistry, by way of introduction, and then closing the book, trusted to impudence to pull him through; and pull him through it did. He says: 'I explained, with many mispronounced words, the hydrogen experiment; and then it occurred to me to arrange a little accident, which would perhaps make them nervous, and prepare them for what was to follow. This I easily did by thrusting a retort neck downwards

into the fire; the few drops of water condensed, and burst it with a loud report. I then proceeded to explain the dangerous nature of chemicals, dwelt on gun-cotton, sudden death of experimentalists by fumes, &c., meanwhile filling my mortar with brick-dust and other harmless ingredients. Having worked the audience up to the required pitch of nervousness, I dilated on the dangerous and uncertain nature of the compound I was mixing. I spoke of my bad health, and wound up by saying: "Startling and marvellous as the announcement may seem, it is nevertheless true, that were I to leave off stirring this mixture for one single second, the whole of this building and every one therein would be blown into unrecognisable atoms!" In less than two minutes there was not a soul left in the place except Mr Mactaggart and myself, who pitched the stuff away, and cheerfully divided the profits."

The artful actor's auditors shewed less coolness than the man, whose hat being riddled by a shooter of small birds, quietly asked: 'Did you shoot at me, sir?' to which the maladroit but no way disconcerted sportsman replied: 'O no, sir; I never hit what I fire at!' at once obviating the necessity of apologising, and mollifying the recipient of the erratic charge, as effectually as Provost Baker was mollified by a ready-witted laddie, brought before the Rutherglen Burgh Court for plucking forbidden fruit. Said the provost to the small offender: 'If you had a garden, and pilfering boys were to break into it and steal your property, in what way would you like to have them punished?' Said the small offender to the provost: 'Aweel, sir, I think I'd let them awa' for the first offence.' Of course he was dismissed after being suitably admonished.

A young sub-lieutenant on sick-leave put up at an hotel in Poonah, and while recovering his health lost his heart, proposed to the fair thief, was accepted, and the wedding-day agreed upon. His colonel, however, happened to disapprove of sub-lieutenants marrying, and telegraphed a peremptory 'Join at once.'

The disgusted subaltern handed the unwelcome missive to his lady-love. She read it, and then, with a blush of maidenly simplicity, remarked: 'I am glad your colonel approves of the match; but what a hurry he is in! I don't think I can be ready so soon, but I'll do my best; because, of course love, the colonel must be obeyed.'

'You don't seem to understand the telegram, darling,' said the dull fellow; 'it quite upsets our plans; he says "Join at once."'

The lady looked up with an arch smile and replied: 'It is you, dear, who don't seem to understand it. The colonel says plainly, "Join at once." Of course he means get married immediately. What else can he possibly mean?'

'What else indeed?' exclaimed the enlightened lover, accepting the new reading without demur. So forty-eight hours afterwards the colonel received the message: 'Your orders are obeyed. We were joined at once.'

A woman's wit rarely fails her when she needs to exercise it. Madame Thierret, a popular French actress, was once travelling to Baden in a first-class carriage, although only provided with a second-class ticket. At Kehl her ticket was demanded by a German employé of the Company. A scene ensued, the actress pretending not to

understand the man. 'If you gabble for two hours,' said she, 'it will be all the same.' The German took her by the arm, for the purpose of ejecting her from the carriage, receiving a box on the ears that sent him reeling to the other side of the platform. This brought up a commissary, who inquired why she had struck the man. 'Because he was insolent; he said all sorts of impertinent things to me,' replied the actress. The officer thought he had caught her nicely, and grimly demanded how she knew that, since she pretended not to understand German. 'Nonsense!' answered ready Madame Thierret; 'when a dog wants to bite you, you understand it very well, although you do not talk doggerel.' And the commissary wisely gave in.

A blind beggar on the Pont-Neuf entreated the charity of passers-by on the plea of being a poor blind man the father of two children. A gentleman who responded to the pitiful appeal saw the same man a few days afterwards at Asnières soliciting alms as a poor blind man the father of four children. 'What!' said he—speaking of course in French—'have you had two children since I saw you in Paris last week?' 'No, sir,' was the unabashed reply; 'but in Paris living is so dear that two children are sufficient to excite pity; in the country, I am obliged to have four at the very least, and even then find it hard to make both ends meet.'

A French gentleman anxious to find a wife for a scapegrace nephew, went to a matrimonial agent, who handed him his list of lady clients. Running this through, he lighted upon his wife's name, entered as desirous of obtaining a husband between the age of twenty-eight and thirty-five—a blonde preferred. Forgetting his nephew, he hurried home to announce his discovery to his wife. That lady was not at all disturbed. 'O yes,' said she; 'that is my name; I put it down when you were so ill in the spring, and the doctor said we must prepare for the worst.' This was at least an honest confession.

John Rives, a Washington journalist, obtained the promise of Major Hobbie, the Assistant-postmaster-general, that a friend of his should be taken on the post-office establishment the first time a vacancy occurred. Rives reminded the major of the promise whenever he saw him, always receiving for answer—'No vacancy.' One day the candidate for office came, breathless with running, to Rives, begging him to come with him to the major. The pair were soon in the big man's presence. He guessed their errand, and hastened to pronounce the familiar words—'No vacancy.' 'O yes, there is,' said the office-seeker: 'Paine is dead, drowned in the canal; I have just seen his body on the bank.' The Assistant-postmaster-general summoned his confidential clerk, and he, on the question being put to him by his chief, said there was no vacancy. Rives's friend insisted there must be, telling Mr Marr he had come straight from seeing Paine's body taken out of the water; but Marr, understanding what the major required of him, quietly answered: 'There is no vacancy. Certainly, poor Paine is gone; but his place was filled an hour ago by the appointment of a man who saw him fall in.' Rives took the hint, and never reminded Hobbie of his promise again.

Tired of telling men he had no room for a

brakeman, the superintendent of a Pennsylvanian line, upon the appearance of a new applicant, said: 'You want to brake on this road, do you? Well, you can sit down there. We have no vacancy just at present; but we kill about two brakeman a day, and I daresay in a few minutes I shall hear of some one losing an arm or a leg, and then you can have the job.' The man thought he would not wait, and would-be brakemen became scarce in that neighbourhood.

Braggarts are generally easy to be scared. A French shoemaker fond of boasting nothing could frighten him, proved an exception to the rule. Two young fellows resolved to put him to the test, so one shammed dead, and the other prevailed upon the shoemaker to watch the body through the night. Being busy, he took his tools with him and worked beside the corpse. About midnight a cup of black coffee was brought to him to keep him awake, and he was so exhilarated by the draught that he struck up a merry song, still plying his hammer vigorously. Suddenly the would-be corpse arose and said in sepulchral tones: 'When a man is in the presence of death he should not sing!' The shoemaker was startled, but recovering his self-possession in a moment, he dealt the corpse a blow on the head with his hammer as he uttered: 'When a man is dead he should not speak!'

There was a real dead man at a Paris boarding-house, and after he had been taken to his last lodging, it got about that he was in the unseemly habit of paying nightly visits to the room in which he died, and for a long time the room remained tenantless in consequence. At last it was taken by a student, who laughed at the idea of the place being haunted. Annoyed at his incredulity, two of the lodgers arrayed themselves in sheets, and glided into the room one night at that witching hour when grave-yards are supposed to yawn. With solemn step and slow, they stalked around the bed, until happening to glance behind, they beheld a sheeted figure watching their movements. This was more than they bargained for, and they were out of the room and in their own chambers almost before they knew it. Next morning they settled with the landlord and departed, never dreaming their intended victim had divined their intentions and paid them in their own coin. They were not quite equal to the occasion.

#### RAPID FULFILMENT OF 'PROPHECY.'

ABOUT seven years ago a little book was published in the Netherlands by a person assuming the name of 'Dr Dioscorides,' in which an attempt was made to picture the social changes which another century or two of invention would effect in the world. The book, after going through three editions in Dutch and also receiving some notice in a German translation, was done into English in the end of 1871. One prophecy of what 2071 A.D. might have in store for us has already been fulfilled in Professor Graham Bell's Telephone; five years instead of two hundred having thus sufficed for its realisation. The conceptions of Dr Dioscorides are so like the realities, that a few of his expressions are worthy of reproduction. 'Arrived at my hotel... methought I heard a kind of music, feeble yet melodious in the extreme. The sound approached as near

as possible that of the human voice; but still the quality was altogether different. Besides, no artist, male or female, was to be seen in the room.' A small box on the table was found to be the source of the sound; and taking the affair to be an ordinary musical-box, the narrator gazes with no little contempt and surprise on a crowd of serious enthusiastic men and women clustered round the table. Amazement and indignation resulted from his question as to the new 'musical instrument;' and it is explained that as the American papers had been writing in terms of most extravagant praise of a new singer who was to eclipse at once Catalani, Malibran, Sonntag, Jenny Lind, and Patti, the opera managers of Europe had hired one of the subatlantic telegraph cables, in order to test her voice by means of the newly-invented 'telephon.' A glimpse of a possible phonograph is also afforded in this curious little book, in sundry slips of paper on which the results of the singing of the distant cantatrice are being recorded; and the narrator describes the enthusiastic exclamation of a musical editor, as he watches one of the curves: 'Won't the connoisseurs be astonished when they see a tone like this!' The trial being satisfactory, an ovation of applause was sent to the singer 'by means of another telephon working in the opposite direction;' and the narrative closes so far as this projected invention is concerned. It may be of interest to watch if, within a few years, others of the scientific speculations of this Dutch prophet shall be fulfilled, such as 'heliocromes' or nature-coloured photographs; 'energeiathes' or storers of force; or the production of artificial light and heat for general instead of isolated use. The effort now being made to use the electric light for urban illumination is so far a step towards one of the novelties which this book pictures as being in store for us in the year 2071.

#### A SCOTTISH SABBATH.

A BLUE mist wraps the peakèd mountain-tops,  
And shrouds the valleys with a wreathèd cloud  
Of dewy vapour, till the glorious sun  
His might puts forth, and with his radiant light  
Dispels the haze, and a bright stream of gold  
Pours forth, and gildeth all the smiling morn.

'Cross the heath-lands to the neighbouring kirk,  
Walk the farm-maiden and her stalwart swain;  
She with her snooded hair, in modesty  
Down-looking, as the neighbours slow pass by;  
He reverent-speaking of the looked-for day—  
Not distant now—when they their lives shall join  
In sacred bonds.

Upon the western breeze  
Is borne the fragrance of the wide-spread moors,  
The pink-tipped gowan bends beneath their feet,  
The harebells quiver, and the golden furze  
Is thickly blossomed. See! they enter now—  
That guileless pair—with all-becoming awe  
(His bonnet doffed in silent reverence),  
The old gray porch; and as come thronging in  
The lairds and peasants—equal each man here  
Unto his neighbour, in this holy place—  
Chime out the bells, upon the soft spring air,  
Their clear-voiced summons to the House of God.

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